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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 119719

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TAGS: [CASC](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: TRAVEL WARNING - SRI LANKA

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¶1. The Department of State warns U.S. citizens about the risks of travel to Sri Lanka due to continued security concerns, especially in the northernmost areas and most of its Eastern Province, as there are still uncleared landmines and potential for incidents by remnant members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Stability in the southern and western areas of the country has improved with the cessation of hostilities. The Department of State urges U.S. citizens to remain vigilant while traveling in Sri Lanka. This replaces the Travel Warning for Sri Lanka dated June 26, 2009 to update information on safety concerns in specific regions of the country, and potential problems for U.S. citizen travelers.

¶2. On May 19, 2009, after more than 25 years of conflict, the Sri Lankan government defeated the LTTE, a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization. The Sri Lankan government still restricts travel in the Northern Province. The U.S. Embassy restricts travel for its employees to the northernmost areas as well as most parts of the Eastern Province for other than official business. Consular services to U.S. citizens in these areas will be delayed. Both regions were previously the primary areas under LTTE control, and remnants of LTTE may still exist. Areas to the north also contain uncleared landmines and demining activity continues. Other post-conflict hazards may be present as well. A large number of Internally Displaced Persons camps are located throughout the northern area and are a sensitive concern to the local authorities.

¶3. U.S. citizens are advised to defer all travel to the Northern Province and the northernmost areas of the North Central Province, as defined by the A14 road, Medawachiya town, and the road from Medawachchiya to Horowupatna. The U.S. Embassy restricts non-official travel by U.S. government personnel to the Eastern Province, other than the A6 road corridor and Trincomalee Town (including as far north as Nilaveli and as far south as China Bay) and

areas in Ampara District south of the A4 road and west of Maha Oya.

¶4. While no LTTE incidents have occurred since the end of the war, the Sri Lankan government's security posture remains heightened with increased armed checkpoints throughout the country. Sri Lankan authorities continue to find hidden caches of military grade weapons in the formerly disputed areas. U.S. citizens are advised against travel on public buses in Sri Lanka, as they were previously targets of LTTE bomb attacks and remain targets of criminal activity; U.S. embassy personnel in Sri Lanka are currently prohibited from traveling by public bus. Demonstrations at or near Western embassies have also increased in frequency, often with inadequate police response for crowd control.

¶5. U.S. citizens of Sri Lankan origin may be subject to additional scrutiny upon arrival and while in the country. In some cases, foreigners of Sri Lankan origin may be detained without their embassies being notified. The activities of journalists, researchers, aid workers, and volunteers receive particular attention.

¶6. U.S. citizens living or traveling in Sri Lanka should be aware of their personal surroundings and follow prudent security practices. There is no indication that U.S. citizens or institutions were, or currently are, specific targets, but U.S. citizens risk becoming victims by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. They

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should particularly avoid political rallies, military bases, military or police convoys, and high security zones. U.S. citizens, including those of Sri Lankan origin, are urged to register with the Embassy via the State Department travel registration page at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/>. The Embassy's contact information is:

U.S. Embassy Colombo  
210 Galle Road  
Colombo 03  
Sri Lanka  
Telephone: +94 11 249 8500  
Emergency after-hours telephone: +94 11 249 8888  
Fax: +94 11 249 8590  
American Citizens Services email: [ColomboACS@state.gov](mailto:ColomboACS@state.gov)

¶7. As the State Department develops information on potential security threats to U.S. citizens overseas, it shares credible threat information through its consular information documents, including Country Specific Information reports and the Worldwide Caution, available on the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>.

¶8. Travelers may obtain up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or, outside the United States and Canada on a toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays), from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

¶9. Minimize considered.  
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